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The men who run the CIA

'I'm not here to produce happy spies,' says director Turner.

By Keyes Beech
Of Our Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON—"I'm a leader of men and I'm good at it. I've made a profession of leading men and women. I'm good at it and I'll continue to be good at it."

That from Adm. Stansfield Turner, 53, director of the Central Intelligence Agency and one of Washington's most controversial figures. His course is plainly full speed ahead and damn the criticism.

Boss of an intelligence empire, newly blessed by his good friend and Annapolis classmate, Jimmy Carter, his picture on the cover of two weekly newsmagazines and the subject of a major interview in another, Turner has taken the offensive against his critics in and outside the intelligence community.

Relishes questioning

Turner obviously relishes fielding questions about criticism of his methods, including those concerning charges that he has wrecked CIA morale by dismissing hundreds of career veterans without so much as a "thank you."

"What's wrong with my style?" he demanded in response to a question suggesting there might be something wrong with it. "It has been successful. I'm not here to produce happy spies. I'm here to be an effective manager and I'm good at it."

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Turner fired more than 200 career CIA men Oct. 31 in what came to be known as the "Halloween Massacre." They were the first of 820 men to be chopped from clandestine services over two years.

Turner charged the press was giving him a bum rap for being "tough



Adm. Stansfield Turner

enough to bite the bitter personnel bullet."

"Every CIA director before me has acknowledged the need" to get rid of surplus personnel at CIA headquarters, Turner said. "These are excess people who were clogging up the system. You are beating on me for doing something for the good of this country."

Clandestine services, the CIA's cloak-and-dagger branch, never had a personnel management policy, said Turner, a systems-oriented management expert.

He praised the Cold War veterans who manned the agency as it grew out of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) after World War II. But, he said, "We must have nonfamilial management."

Heart of the matter

Turner's remarks went to the heart of the bitter battle between him and the career professionals. Gone are the days when they could drop into the office of earlier directors—Richard Helms or William E. Colby—for a friendly, understanding chat.

"Anybody who tried that today would get blown out of the water," said one newly retired CIA veteran.

Turner denied near-unanimous reports that CIA morale was never lower. He said the intelligence product is better than it was a year ago. "These people are dedicated and work hard."

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